

***Transcript of Provincial Question Period
41st Parliament, 2nd Session
Wednesday, December 13, 2017***

Unedited Transcript

The following is a partially edited transcript of Question Period.

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MPP Brown to Premier Wynne (Hoskins) Re: Youth Mental Health

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. I've said many times around the province, the part of the people's guarantee I'm most excited about is our commitment on mental health. It is the dirty little secret in Ontario's health care system and no matter what spin or rhetoric we hear from the Liberal government, we're not doing enough. I want to give the Premier a chance today to respond. Whether the Liberal government will match the \$1.9 billion in additional new funding for mental health that our party has put forward to make sure we close the gap on mental health services in the province of Ontario?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I certainly agree with the leader of the opposition that there is much more that needs to be done on mental health, Mr. Speaker. Mental health care in this province is an area where we're catching up. Over the last decade to 20 years, Mr. Speaker, there has been increased awareness of mental health concerns, and that has meant, rightly, that there are more people who are presenting with mental health issues and that those need to be dealt with. But, Mr. Speaker, the remedy that the opposition party is putting forward is inadequate. That's the reality, Mr. Speaker. Over the last ten years, we've invested \$10 billion. What they're proposing is go forward \$1.9 billion over ten years. Mr. Speaker, that is not enough. We are going to commit to more than that, Mr. Speaker, because there is more that is needed.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. Maybe the Liberal research is a day off. Maybe the government's own public accounts have been ee don't even Russ -- erroneous. We all know the reality. They haven't invested in mental health. The horrifying stories we hear across province wouldn't be happening if we had a government that made this a priority. The C.E.O. Of the children's mental health Ontario, Kimberly Morin, told me that children are waiting as long as 18 months for mental health care. 18 months. The Premier says she's done all this investment. It doesn't show in the government's public accounts. It doesn't show in the care and treatment available in the province of Ontario and I want to ask the Premier, is waiting 18 months adequate for a young person who has the courage to come forward and say they need help? Is that adequate in the province of Ontario?

>> Minister Eric Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to meet with the -- any member of the P.C.S including the leader to go through in detail their erroneous calculations. Mr. Speaker, we know this party has a history of getting the math wrong and they've done it yet -- Mr. Speaker, we know that that party has a history of getting the math wrong and they've got it wrong again. In fact if you

look at their commitment for the next ten years of an additional \$1.9 billion, that is in stark contrast to our very real and delivered investment of new funding using the exactly the same -- Of more than \$10 billion over the last decade.

[Mr. Speaker, they need to correct the record.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. The Premier and Minister of health haven't actually looked at their own public accounts where it shows the allocations on mental health. The are the is it's easy to attack the opposition and say you disagree with these assertions. But, Mr. Speaker, I'm quoting a stat from the Kim bore Murphy -- Kimberly Murphy. I'm quoting a stat from Kimberly moralin, the C.E.O. Of children's mental health of Ontario. You're disagreeing with her assessment. The "Globe and mail" just this week wrote an article that is shocking, horrifying, that in cases of a young person trying to take their own life, they don't get to see a psychiatrist in six months. Six months. That's a "Globe and mail" article. And so I know it's convenient to pass this question off to a Minister. I want to know from the Premier -- Do you think waiting 18 months is adequate? Do you think waiting six months for a psychiatrist is adequate? Do you accept these wait times for mental health care in the province --

>> Minister Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, that's absolutely not acceptable. That's why this government has made the largest mental health investment in Canada's history. Not what they're proposing. What they're proposing falls far short, Mr. Speaker, and I'm happy to share the math with them. And now I understand why the "Globe and mail" characterized their proposal as fiscally risky, economically dubious, Mr. Speaker. The math doesn't add up and I'm beginning to feel sorry for that party as eventually, over time -- and I'm happy to assist them with this -- they will realize that their calculations are so bad and they are so far off the mark that it represents roughly one-fifth of the new investments that we've made in mental health over the last decade, Mr. Speaker. This results in a dramatic flattening of the curve of the increased investments that this province has made. Mental health is critically important, much more important than they're giving it.>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the premier. Maybe the liberal research is a day off. Maybe the government's own public accounts have been ee

MPP Brown to Minister Thibeault Re: AG Hydro Report

>> PC Leader Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question's for the Premier. We all know that Goreway was among the companies that gamed the system for over \$260 million of ineligible expenses and Goreway executive Rob Colbeck has been at the centre of this latest scandal. Rob Colbeck's December 1st resignation letter states he is resigning as the co-chair of the market renewal working group, not as a member. According to the IESO website, he remains a member. Mr. Speaker, why is an executive from Goreway allowed to remain on the board given the scandal of inappropriate expenses, the same people who gamed the system should not be the ones rewriting the rules. So directly to the Premier, will this be addressed and addressed immediately?

>> Minister Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we've said over the last week since the auditor brought forward her report, any abuses of the system, Mr. Speaker, are completely unacceptable, and that's why we're pleased that the system operator has investigated those market participants and where significant wrongdoing was present, Mr. Speaker, compensation has been recovered and returned to the ratepayers. There's \$168 million, 200 million in ineligible costs. As also mentioned by the leader of the opposition, Mr. Speaker, there have been resignations from the market renewal committee, Mr. Speaker. The two chairs have moved off of that committee, Mr. Speaker, and moving forward looking at Goreway, Goreway also made changes after they found that they were -- they weren't complying with the system, Mr. Speaker. They were fined a record \$10 million, Mr. Speaker. And \$100 million of that money was recouped by the IESO. We're making sure that we have a system that is going to be rebuilt -- Made significant changes millimetre and IESO is constantly monitoring.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. My question about why that individual is still a member was not answered but I'll try a different angle. One of the companies in the auditor general was the government-run O.P.G. Amid the scandal. Yesterday the Minister told us that O.P.G. repaid all of their ineligible expenses by 2015. And we know the former C.E.O. Was given a half-a-million-dollar bonus the following year. Why was he given this half a million-dollar bonus? Was it to keep quiet on the scandal? By the way, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't that the government found it. They got caught. That's how it came out. They didn't -- by the auditor general.

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The innuendo that's coming from the opposition continues to just fester, Mr. Speaker. It just shows that they really don't understand how this system is working, Mr. Speaker. O.P.G. Actually stepped forward when they recognized, Mr. Speaker, that they were claiming ineligible expenses. They worked with the IESO. That's why there was no fine imposed by the IESO on O.P.G. At the time, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that they

actually recouped those costs, making sewer that they could understand the rules moving forward, and as O.P.G. Said, Mr. Speaker, the audit did determine that there were differences in understanding what constituted eligible costs under the program, Mr. Speaker. In respect of some of what were thought to be eligible costs, O.P.G. Repaid certain claimed amounts after d Both O.P.G. And the ieso had come to a conclusion with, Mr. Speaker, way back in 2015 discussions concluded on what constituted eligible costs.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier. The Minister of energy says we don't know how it's working. I know exactly how it's working. This government has allowed executives, power executives to expense Raccoon traps and scuba gear. It's ridiculous. It's disgusting, Mr. Speaker. And while nearly tens of millions of dollars has -- tens of millions of dollars --Mr. Speaker, there's still tens of millions of dollars inappropriate expenses that have yet to be repaid. So my question to the Premier, hopefully the Premier will actually answer this time, Mr. Speaker. Can we get a guarantee that tens of millions of dollars inappropriate expenses that have not been retrieved by the taxpayers. That the taxpayers will get those funds back by December 31st? Yes or no to the Premier?

>>Minister thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the important thing to understand, and I think we can all agree, Mr. Speaker, is that, any abuse of the system is completely unacceptable and that's why, Mr. Speaker, we were pleased to see the ieso act on the recommendations not only from the auditor general, Mr. Speaker, but from the market surveillance programs and committees that are done both by the O.E.B. And by the ieso, Mr. Speaker. They've made sure that they've brought forward new practices and new principles to make sure things like this, abuses like this, Mr. Speaker, don't happen again. Because we on this side of the House want to ensure that we continue to bring forward programs that help ratepayers lower their bills, Mr. Speaker, and that's what we have done as a government. We've brought forward the fair hydro plan which brought forward a 25% reduction helping all families right across the province and many, many other programs. But when it comes to these two programs, Mr. Speaker, the ieso has put in place new changes that are making sure things like this will not happen again, Mr. Speaker

MPP Horwath to Premier Wynne (Hoskins) Re: Hospital Overcrowding

>> NDP Leader Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. My question's for the Premier. Ontario's hospitals have been underfunded for decades. Ontario families have been coming forward with heartbreaking stories of suffering in overcrowded hospitals for months now, while the Liberal government has called any criticism fear mongering. But the Ontario hospital association says that that criticism is called for the O.H.A. Says hospitals are on the brink of a crisis. Will the Premier for once listen to the experts and take the actions that the O.H.A. Is calling for?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know I am taking -- we are taking this issue very, very seriously, Mr. Speaker. I do take what the O.H.A. Says very seriously. I think it's extremely important that we listen to people on the front lines who know what it is happening in the hospitals and that we combine that with our own capacity and our own knowledge and that we come up with solutions, Mr. Speaker, which is exactly why we are expanding the number of beds in the system. Exactly why we've put a 3% increase for hospitals in our budget, Mr. Speaker. Why we have put an infusion of cash into the system, Mr. Speaker, understanding that there are needs. I believe in that same report, Mr. Speaker, the association called for increased home care funding, Mr. Speaker, increased long-term care funding all of which we are doing so we take that very seriously. We are in the process of expanding, particularly at this time of year, Mr. Speaker, expanding capacity in the hospital system.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the fact is that this Premier and her health Minister have arrogantly ignored the experts repeatedly when it comes to hospital care. They shorted the system 300 million in the last budget, Speaker. She refuses to listen to patients and their families. She refuses to listen to doctors and frontline health care workers and she refuses to listen to the Ontario hospital association, which has been ringing alarm bells about the overcrowding and hallway medicine since the last budget, Speaker. Will this Premier now finally admit that she was wrong to freeze hospital budgets for a decade and actually invest in the quality care that Ontario families deserve?

>> Minister Eric Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, the lead other of the third party knows that our health care and our hospital budget has continued to increase year over year. We invested this year between the budget and fall economic statement an additional \$600 million into the hospital system. \$.3 billion over the next three years to decrease wait times, Mr. Speaker. And I applaud the hard work and the advocacy of all of our hospital officials, frontline workers and leaders, including the O.H.A. And I'm gratified that they're coming forward tomorrow to present as part of the prebudget consultations. Their input and our

close relationship is critically important to getting this right and get it right we will. We make decisions like the additional 1,200 beds, equivalent of six community hospitals we've infused into the system. That's almost 10% of new beds into the province. Make decisions like that in concert and consultation with the O.H.A. To make sure we are making the right steps.

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, it's hard to believe they can get it right when they've gotten it wrong for over a decade. The o.h.a.'s pre budget submission says that, quote, an increase of 4.55% in hospital funding will ensure that hospitals have the resources needed to avoid a significant capacity crisis in Ontario east health care system, end quote. A significant capacity crisis. This is what the Liberals have delivered to Ontarians. We know that there are already thousands of patients lining the hallways of our hospitals across our province and the O.H.A. Is saying that without this investment, it will only get worse. Will the Premier stop ignoring this crisis, start listening to the experts and make the investments necessary to end hallway medicine in the province of Ontario?

>> Minister Hoskins: Speaker, we are listening and we are taking this seriously. What we won't do, though, is take lessons from a party and the lead other of the third party represents the party that committed in the last campaign to eliminate \$600 million out of health care and out of education. When they were in power in the 1990s, though closed 24% of all acute care beds. They closed 13% of mental health beds. In total 9,600 beds were closed under them. Mr. Speaker, here's what the O.H.A. Has to say in their prebudget submission. Ontario hospitals appreciate the Ontario government's leadership and continued investment in hospitals, including an increase in the 2017 Ontario budget and the winter plans to assist hospitals and the homeless community care sectors in addressing high patient volumes. These investments will improve the health system's ability to manage the significant influx of patients expected during --Over the next number of months, Mr. Speaker. This is the kind of co-operation that we endorsed, we support and we -- enables us to make the right investments to build a strong system.

MPP Horwath to Minister Hoskins Re: Hospital Overcrowding

>> NDP Leader Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker. My next question's also for the Premier. The Premier's chronic underfunding of our hospitals on top of years of Conservative cuts have created an overcrowding and hallway medicine crisis in Ontario. Today the NDP Released new information showing the extent of the damage that this Liberal government has caused in my hometown of Hamilton. Between June 1st and October 1st, 2017, medical beds at St. Joseph's health care in Hamilton were operating over 105% capacity, every single day, Speaker. Temporary beds will not solve this crisis. When will the Premier finally do something to help people in Hamilton who are lying on stretchers suffering because of her budget freezes?

>> Minister Eric Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, we are making the necessary investments to ensure that our hospitals are able to address what are often complex and multifactoral challenges when it comes to capacity, and in some parts of the province, like Peel for example or Mississauga and Halton, it's because there is a significant growth of the population. And in Hamilton, Mr. Speaker, we're making the correct investments to -- I wish I had the figures in front of me Mr. Speaker -- in terms of the additional beds that we've added to Hamilton health sciences, to St. Joe so's as well, to the entire community, Juravinski on the mountain, Mr. Speaker, so that they are able to provide the care that is required and the highest quality of care that they provide on an ongoing basis, Mr. Speaker. That is in addition to the \$500 million. We've infused into the hospital system this year alone on top of \$500 million last year. We'll continue to invest in our hospitals, Mr. Speaker .

>> Andrea Horwath: Speaker, this new information shows that on any given day, the St. Joseph's emergency room, in the St. Joseph's emergency room there are between 5 and 31 people waiting for an inpatient bode. They wait in unconventional spaces without a call button to even push if they need a nurse and without a proper access to washroom facilities. When will this Premier get serious and make sure that people of this province actually have reliable, quality health care when and where they need it?

>> Minister Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, just a few weeks ago we added 24 additional inpatient beds to St. Joseph's in Hamilton. We added 30 additional beds to Hamilton health sciences in Hamilton, Mr. Speaker. And in addition three neonatal intensive care unit -- unit beds. Three additional bassinets to care for those most vulnerable tiny individuals. Mr. Speaker, we are making the correct investments. We know as well when we look from third party information that we received, that our wait times in hospitals, in emergency rooms continues to go down despite an increased population. We're seeing that objective third-party

data, and in fact as I referenced last week the report from the Fraser institute, which says that Ontario has the best wait times in the country, Mr. Speaker .

>> Andrea Horwath: On August 10, 2017, St. Joseph's hospital reached the alarmingly high occupancy rate of 139%. 139%. In fact, the O.H.A. Says that this is not uncommon in our hospitals across Ontario. In fact it says that half of Ontario's hospitals were operating above 100% capacity this summer. These numbers represent real people in my community and all across Ontario, who have been forced to get medical care from a hospital that is severely underfunded and overcrowded. Temporary beds, many of which are not in place yet, are simply not enough to begin fixing the decades of damage done by Conservatives and Liberal cuts and the O.H.A. Agrees, Speaker. Why is this Premier, why is she letting the people of Ontario down? Why is she letting them continue to suffer in krofr crowded hospitals?

>> Minister Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, many people believe that the best illustration of a party's actions are to look at theirabless in the past, Mr. Speaker, and look at their record -- their actions. There for all to see. From 1990 to 1995, those were awful years for Ontario's health care system because they closed 24, a quarter of all of the acute care beds in this province. And I am even embarrassed to say as well for them that they closed 13% of the mental health beds in the province. Collectively coming close to a P.C. Record, when they were in power, when the P.C.S closed 10,000 hospital beds. The NDP In five short years were responsible forclosing 9,600 beds. We have added beds to the holt care system. We have done that over past years. We continue to do that this year. We will continue to make those important investments going forward.

MPP Walker to Minister Hoskins Re: Long-Term Care Home Patient Safety

>> MPP Bill Walker: My question's to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The auditor general's 2017 report states the backlog of complaints and critical incidents in long-term care homes requiring inspections keeps increasing. This year the backlog jumped to 3,370 from 2,800 last year. Minister, despite promises to fix the critical incidents backlog, we are not seeing improvements. Sadly the backlog has actually increased by 80%. I want to know is the fact that you're not acting on critical inspections a sign that our seniors facing insecurity is not a priority for your government?

>> Minister Eric Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely is a priority for this government. Apparently it's not a priority for that party because, just yesterday, they voted against our legislation that will be creating enhanced oversight and accountability and inspection and fines. All of those measures which are critically important to ensure that our loved ones and Ontarians who call long-term care their home, who are residents of long-term care that they receive the highest quality care and best supports. They voted just 24 hours ago, Mr. Speaker, against a whole set of measures that will, fortunately -- despite their opposition, that it will dramatically enhance the powers and punitive measures we can place on those most egregious homes that do need to improve the care that's being provided. They did no inspections at all of long-term care homes. Every single year we inspect 100% of our homes.

>> MPP Walker: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Back to the Minister of health. Must be an election looming in the near future because for 14 years you've done nothing for that sector. Delays and critical incident inspections can place seniors in long-term care homes at risk. I think it's completely unacceptable that you are not meeting your promised goals especially in light of the high-profile cases of abuse and public inquiry into the murders in long-term care homes. Families of loved ones in care have a right to expect the safety and care of their patients will be your utmost priority. They want the increased scrutiny. They want to see you making a difference, Minister. Will the Minister address the lingering questions around the safety, security and whole being of seniors by appearing before the public inquiry into long-term care?

>> Minister Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, the justice -- and I am again gratified he met and heard from the families and loved ones of the victims of this horrible tragedy just yesterday and will be making her decision over the coming month or so in terms of their participation in this inquiry. But, Mr. Speaker, I have to get back to their bad math. So we've budgeted for 5,000 beds over the next four years \$380 million. They're proposing to create three times as many long-term care beds but they've only budgeted \$77 million. Three times as many beds. One-fifth the

amount that it's going to cost. So it costs about \$60,000 per long-term care bed per year to operate that bed, Mr. Speaker. They've budgeted a measly 5000-Mr. Speaker, again the path of their proposal is so bad and I'm going to be happy to reveal it to them and I'm happy to explain it to them

MPP Sattler to Premier Wynne (Matthews) Re: Student Drop-Outs After College Strike

>> MPP Peggy Sattler: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Speaker, throughout five long weeks of the College strike, this Liberal government assured students that they would not lose their most ter. Yesterday we learned that more than 25 though full-time College students, about one in ten, have not only lost their semester. They have lost their dreams of a College education after being forced to drop out to get their tuition refunded. We know that more students will likely drop out after treatmenting to complete the condensed semester. As I have stated before, sections 4 and 5 of the Ontario Colleges of applied arts and technology act allow the government to intervene in College affairs when it is in the public interest. Speaker, why did this government refuse to act to prevent the lives of more than 25,000 full-time students from being completely derailed?

>> Premier Kathleen Wynne: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I -- you know, I know that no one in this legislature is happy that there are students who have made the choice to leave College, Mr. Speaker. I'd say to the 09% of students who are back in the classroom, Mr. Speaker, I know that they're working hard and I hope that -- I hope that it goes well for them, Mr. Speaker. I also say to the students who felt that they needed to withdraw and have received support by getting their tuition refunded, Mr. Speaker, which I think we can agree is the fair thing to do. I say to those students, Mr. Speaker, I hope they will work with their cleblg and -- College and find a way back into the system. Certainly it would be my expectation, our expectation, Mr. Speaker, that Colleges will be reaching out to those students and helping them to see the path back. But, Mr. Speaker, to the 90% of students who are back this College, I wish them well, and to the rest I hope that they will find their way back in January, Mr. Speaker .

>> MPP Sattler: Again to the Premier. Speaker, the regular retention rate for a College term is 98%. In other words, just two out of 100 students choose not to complete their semester. After delaying the release of the tuition refund numbers, we now know that one in ten full-time College students won't be completing their term. What we don't know is the number of part-time students who have opted to drop out, raising questions about how much work the part-time numbers might be. Speaker, Ontarians deserve to know the total number of students who have been forced to put their lives on hold or give up their dreams because of this government's inaction. Will the Premier tell the people of Ontario how many part-time students have received a tuition refund and what the plan is to get both full-time and part-time students back on track.

>> Minister Deb Matthews: >Well, Speaker, I just have to say every step of the way in getting students back into the classroom was blocked by that party. Those

of us who were in this House debating back-to-work legislation, Speaker, remember the House leader, the NDP House leader, every chance we had to get students back -- remember what he said? No. So, Speaker, whether it was not supporting free tuition for one third of our students, Speaker --Or whether it was getting back -- students back to work after the strike, all -- back to school after the strike. All we heard from that party was "No."

MPP Qaadri to Minister Hoskins Re: Mental Health Funding

>> MPP Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and considers this government's extraordinary commitment and developments in mental health. Speaker, as a physician himself, I know that the Minister of health has a deep and abiding understanding of what mental health is all about. We in medical school, one of the first things we're ever taught in Latin is *mens Sanaa in corpora Sanaa*. A sound mind in a sound body. And I know from my many, many coroner consultations with the Minister and the fact that we sit at the same table in caucus, that he has personally treated patients with Trans panic attacks, anxiety, posttraumatic stress and so many disorders. He has the background, history, stamina, partnerships and the dedicated work force to deliver on the type of health care that Premier Wynne, herself a daughter of physician, demands for the people of Ontario. So my question is this. Can the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care please inform this House about the important investment our government is making in mental health across the province?

>> Minister Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Minister of health, I believe that physical and mental health are two sides of the same coin. There can't be one without the other, Mr. Speaker. And I want to start off by saying how proud I am and how far we have come as a province, all parties in this legislature have pushed past the stigma and we all agree that together we need to do more. And it's important to take a moment to appreciate how all Ontarians will benefit from that. Now the Conservatives have come to the table offering an average of \$191 million a year over the next ten years, Mr. Speaker, but they forgot that before you announce an increase, you have to replace the base from the previous year, Mr. Speaker. I know as a province we can do better. We can work together to truly build the system, reduce wait times and offer more services. Mr. Speaker, while the party opposite has come forward with \$1.9 billion over ten years -- This team has put 10 billion more into the system since 2008 and a Liberal government will put more than \$1.9 billion forward in investments in mental health over the next ten years.

>> MPP Qaadri: Thank you, Speaker. Once again I thank the Minister of health for not only the answer today but for his as I said abiding commitment to mental health, along with physical and emotional health. Speaker, as you well know he is a physician who has dealt with these issues on a one-to-one basis, as a public health physician on a system-wide basis, as a public health physician, as a recognized internationally for his efforts in Africa with war child for ten years and he's been recognized as you know and now running the entire show in the province of Ontario. As Gail Zuker, C.E.O. Of Addictions and Mental Health Ontario was quoted in the "Globe and Mail" today -- excellent mental health care

is available from health professionals other than psychiatrists. Social workers, psychologists, psychotherapists, mental health workers publicly funded community health and addiction agencies. Speaker, we are a long way from hula hoops. Minister, can you please tell this House again what is our government doing to further, under your stewardship, build up the mental health of the province of Ontario? Minister Hoskins: Speaker, we are a long way from hula hoops. Minister, can you please tell this House again what is our government doing to further, under your stewardship, build up the mental health of the province of Ontario?

>> Minister Hoskins: We are working with experts and stakeholders and persons with lived experience, their loved ones across the province to ensure we're putting our investments into mental health where they are most and truly needed. In working with the Premier and this caucus is to put those necessary resources forward. Those resources like cognitive behavioural therapy, which will provide more than 100,000 Ontarians living with conditions such as anxiety and depression, with more access to community-based structured psychotherapy services, or our youth wellness hubs, Mr. Speaker, where young people aged 12 to 25 can find walk-in one-stop access to mental health and addiction services and other health, social and employment supports, or creating more supportive housing, where this year up to 1150 additional supportive housing units will be added. On top of the 1,000 new units added over the last three years to help reduce homelessness and improve supports, Mr. Speaker .

MPP Scott to Minister Naqvi Re: Human Trafficking

>> MPP Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Attorney General. Victim service organizations across the province are absolutely overwhelmed with requests for their services. Many are struggling to keep up with the sheer numbers, all while dealing with more complex cases, including victims of human sex trafficking. Haliburton Kawartha victim services in my riding received just \$18,000 to hire someone under the victim quick response program last year. That was barely enough to hire even half a person. They made the most of it and helped dozens of trafficking victims. Unfortunately this paltry amount was only onetime funding. They won't be able to continue their important work next year without a clear commitment from this government. So my question to the Minister is will he assure Haliburton Kawartha victim services that they will have the funding they need. To help human sex trafficking victims in the new year?

>> Minister Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. This is an important question and I want to be re clear that the Ontario government is very much committed to helping victims of crime when they need it the most. Speaker, since 2003, our government has invested over \$1 billion in vital services to support those who have been harmed by crime. And as part of our government's strategy to end human trafficking, we will invest \$1.93 million over four years to expand the benefits available under the victim quick response program to better serve victims of human trafficking. Speaker, we are also investing \$6.65 million over four years to enhance the victim crisis assistance Ontario program so that our community-based service delivery partners can provide better supports and case coordination for victims of human trafficking. Speaker, further as parliament of government's sexual violence plan, in 2015 we increased funding. To centres by \$1.75 million per year. Speaker there's definitely more to do. I remain very much committed to supporting victim services across the province.

>> MPP Scott: I'm glad to hear the Minister east committed but you seem happy to throw small amounts, pots of money at the problem hoping that it will go away. It just shows that you're not taking the concerns of victim services organizations seriously. What I hear is that they are exasperated. They have not heard anything from the government in response to their call for a review of the current funding formula. Several of my Colleagues on this side of the House have raised these concerns over the past several months, for all across our riding, hope 24/7 for example. But this government is not listening. There is still no action. Mr. Speaker, will this government finally commit to a review of its victim service funding formula nconsultation with providers to ensure that it meets the needs. Of victims in a sustainable way, Mr. Speaker ?

>> Minister Naqvi: Speaker this government has done more to support victim services than any other previous government. This government and this Premier, the work it has done in terms of putting an end to human trafficking, in terms of combating sexual violence and harassment, there is no example of any government in the history of Ontario the amount of investments and policy work that has been done by this government. Speaker, I'm very proud of the government that takes these issues seriously because it goes to building an inclusive economy. Speaker, what worries us the most is the \$12 million cut they have outlined, the Conservatives have outlined in their platform that would cut exactly these kinds of programs. It's ok for the member opposite to stand up and ask for more investments where, by her own platform, is going to cut all victim services and all this important funding for her community and communities across the province.

MPP Natyshak to Minister Lalonde Re: Emergency and Disaster Planning

>> MPP Taras Natyshak: Thank you, Speaker. My question is to the Minister of corrections and community safety. Speaker, the auditor general east report made it alarmingly clear that this Liberal government is not prepared to manage a major emergency in the province. The A.G. Highlight That emergency management plans haven't been updated since 2008 and that provincial nuclear emergency preparedness planning hasn't been updated since 2009. In communities like mine in amherstburg, who are within the fallout of the fernie 2 nuclear plant in Michigan are left vulnerable with no support for a potential disaster by this government. We're joined by fire chief Bruce Montone and Deputy chief from amherstburg. They're here on behalf of our communities to listen to your answer to this important question. The question is the same one this town has been asking since 2015. When will the Liberal government provide the same level of support to the town of amherstburg as it does for other designated municipal areas that receive assistance in Ontario?

>> Minister Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you very much for the member for his question. And I want to say welcome to our legislature to our chief here today. You know, Mr. Speaker, the auditor general agreed that Ontario can respond and will respond to any emergency. And her findings were actually very consistent with those of our earlier independent review. Our response could be more efficient. And this is exactly why we launched our new emergency management action plan, and that includes the release of an updated provincial nuclear emergency response plan in the coming weeks. We're also going to expand our emergency management capacity through agreements with our neighbouring provinces and Resources and also supporting our municipality by making it easier to access critical supplies. And resource and by improving information and resource sharing, Mr. Speaker .

>> MPP Natyshak: Speaker, with all due respect none of that answer addresses the issue that the town of amherstburg -- Speaker, the province has been aware since November 2015 that, in the event of a nuclear accident at the fernie 2 facility, the town of amherstburg does not have the equipment, personnel, the expertise or capacity to appropriately respond to such an event. Despite clear letters to this Minister and submissions to the provincial nuclear emergency preparedness plan highlight the danger to our community, the Minister has effectively ignored all of our concerns. Will the minute story tell this House, when the people in amherstburg and entire region of es Essex county can expect the same resources and assistance so they can plan to be as safe as other designated communities in Ontario?

>> Minister Lalonde: I'm very happy to respond again to the question. You know, Mr. Speaker, our nuclear power has been the backbone of Ontario's energy supply for 40 years in Ontario, providing a clean energy that helps us to get rid of dirty coal and meets our G.S.G.S reduction goals. You know, when you look at what we are providing for municipalities such as Amherstburg, Ackman our agency will help with both our government and partner in support with the municipality will help actually strain its emergency management program. What we do, Mr. Speaker, is help work together ebb enhancing the planning, the training of public education, emergency exercise to ensure that the community that has the continued availability. To respond to emergency and nuclear. We've also took note of the letter that was sent during the public consultations and our expert panel has --

MPP Martins to Minister Naqvi Re: Modernizing Legal Services

>> MPP Cristina Martins: My question this morning is for the Attorney General. My constituents in Davenport are accessing more services and getting more things done on just the smartphones than ever before. They are shopping online, resolving their disputes, banking and setting up mortgages all on their tab locates. They expect that level of convenience in all aspects of their lives. In the ever evolving world around us, the justice system has just not kept pace. Mountains of paper, endless filing and mandatory attendance for things that just do not need to be in person all make for a system that is sorely out of date. That is why we're so pleased to see the Attorney General last week announce new measures to bring the justice system into the 21st century. These new measures which the Attorney General has called, putting justice within reach, are incredibly important. Can the Attorney General -- Please explain how this plan will actually put justice within reach for my constituents?

>> Minister Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. I want to thank the member from Davenport for asking a very timely question. Speaker, in order to maintain access to justice, Ontario's justice system must continue to adapt and evolve to continue meeting the needs of the people it serves every day. That is why, Speaker, the ministry of the Attorney General is committed to making the justice system simpler, faster and more affordable for all Ontarians. We are developing and delivering user-centered consumer focused digital services that are faster, that are easier to navigate and low or no cost to the people who use it. Speaker, in the next year, new online 24-7 paperless options will be available for getting more important tasks completed more easily and conveniently. One example, Speaker, of this plan will be that Ontarians can now -- use new digital tools for potential jurors for example to complete questionnaires online and receive -- Summonses by email. Speaker, by introducing modern technology and developing data systems that allow information to be shared with the click of a button.

>> MPP Martins: Speaker, I would like to thank the Attorney General for his response. It is very exciting that my constituents can expect a modernized justice sector. However, Mr. Speaker, we have heard many promises to modernize our justice system before -- promises. While the news is exciting I do point to how far behind the justice system has fallen behind in terms of modernization and I wonder what will the Attorney General be doing this time to ensure that this does not -- that this actually happens this time. This is a necessary change and we have a long road ahead but this is a step in the right direction. However, the system in place -- the systems in place have been around for so long. What makes the Attorney General think that he will be able to change the system that has been operating the same way for such a long period of time? A system that

is inherently known for sticking to tradition. Can the Attorney General please put clarity to this chamber on why this modernization will actually happen this time?

>> Minister Naqvi: Well, Speaker, we have to modernize our justice system. It's something that I've identified as a priority for our government and for our ministry. And, Speaker, we are taking steps that are practical and prudent in making sure that we are bringing digital options for users of our justice system across the province, whether it starts from efilings in our small claims court or for civil matters or, Speaker, in spring very soon we will have joint divorces that could be filed online as well. These are just some practical examples of things that we are already doing. Speaker that, is why also we have outlined all our priorities in a digital justice action plan so that Ontarians have a road map available to them with time lines. So that it can keep us accountable. Speaker, what worries me is when I see the opposition Conservatives' platform where there's no talk about how we will modernize the system.

MPP Jones to Minister Del Duca Re: GTA Highway Expansion

>> MPP Sylvia Jones: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of transportation. Twelve years ago the G.T.A. West corridor was identified in the growth plan for the greater golden horseshoe. Since then, the Minister 's consistently dragged his feet on the environment assessment of the G.T.A. West. Two years ago the Minister took the unprecedented move of suspending the environmental assessment. My freedom of information request shows that the ministry of transportation has spent over \$14 million studying the highway corridor with nothing to show for it. This week will mark the second anniversary since the Minister spus -- suspended the enenvironmental assessment. Why the delay, Minister ?

>> Minister Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much, Speaker. I thank the member from Dufferin-caledon for her question. She may not be aware of this. A number of days ago on the ministry's website we posted there will be an update regarding this particular project that will be taking place within 60 days of that notice going up on the website, Speaker. I'm extremely proud to be part of a government that has literally invested billions of dollars in highways in every corner of the province, Speaker. Just other day I joined with members from the government caucus in brampton where we announced and officially opened up lanes for the widened highway 410 in that neighbourhood, Speaker. A few days later I was standing alongside in the brisk weather the member from Etobicoke Centre and the Minister of housing, the Minister responsibility for poverty reduction as we opened lanes on highway 42, Speaker, in northern Etobicoke. Speaker, on that same day out in Durham in the clarington area, Speaker, standing alongside the Minister of agriculture and the member from dur had a, we announced that starting in January, highway 407 east-2 a --Will be open to vehicular traffic.

>> MPP Jones: Only thing the Minister has done in the G.T.A. West corridor is continued to kick the can down the road. You announced it two years ago. You announced it a year ago and now you're saying another 06 days. What's the delay? The reality is the land along the supposed route of the G.T.A. West has been frozen for years. Peel and York region and municipalities around the gtha have been calling for the minute story to finish the environmental assessment. Residents and municipalities have no faith that this Minister will finally make a decision on the future of the project. After all the Minister 's committed in the past to provide, quote, updates only to find another reason to delay. After \$14 million spent, will the Minister commit today to restarting the environmental assessment of the G.T.A. West corridor?

>> Minister Del Duca: Speaker, as I mentioned a seconding a our government's record when it relates to highway construction is unprecedented. We with literally again investing in highways in the gtha and every corner of the province of

Ontario. Speaker, what I will not accept and will not contend with gracefully in this chamber, Speaker, is a member of Ontario's Conservative party. Let's not forget this would be the party that first told and then sold highway 407 to a Spanish consortium, Speaker. I will not take lectures from a member from Patrick Brown and the Ontario Conservatives' caucus when it comes to highways that are needed here in this province, Speaker. We know, Speaker, we know all about their people's guarantee and we know one thing, Speaker. What's guaranteed in their plan should they ever come to power, Speaker, will be less infrastructure investments, will be less public transit, will be fewer highways where they're needed, Speaker, will be less money for cycling infrastructure, Speaker --

MPP Fife to Minister Hoskins Re: Long-Term Care Wait-Times

>> MPP Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. My office is working with Patricia and John baton. They have been married for 64 years but they are currently forced to live apart because they have differing health needs. Patricia is in a dementia unit at university Gates along-term care facility while don is living at the west hill retirement home. Every morning, don takes a cab to visit Patricia at her long-term care facility so that they can have breakfast together. It breaks his heart to leave her each day. Our seniors should not have to go to such great lengths to be together, especially in a time when they need each other the most. Currently don and Patricia are in a very long reunification wait list to the Waterloo- Wellington Ihin. Speaker, what will this government do to reunite don and Patricia as soon as humanly possible?

>> Minister Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I understand the -- I believe I understand the question correctly that one individual is currently in a retirement home and the other is in a long-term care home. I'm not sure if the first individual has been assessed and is eligible for long-term care or not. Perhaps the member could address that in supplementary. But we are in fact making important changes. I quite frankly call them dramatic changes. And one of the member's Colleagues I have to acknowledge the member from niagara, was instrumental in encouraging us and helping us look to this issue of reunification of loved ones, of couples, elderly couples, Mr. Speaker. So we're making changes that will -- and I need to be careful. I'm not sure if the regulation is still posted -- proposed changes that will make it much easier for our long-term care homes. Those individuals to be reunited. But perhaps the member, if she doesn't mind, could just indicate whether the individual in retirement is eligible for long-term care.

>> MPP Fife: And I will tell the Minister that there is a letter in his office with the details. But, Speaker, we need a dramatic change on long-term care. Almost a decade ago. Otherwise we would not be in this position right now today. Retirement should not be marked by stress and uncertainty. Don and Patricia east story is just one of the many stories of seniors in my community who are forced to live separately. The waiting time for don and Patricia to be reunited is currently estimated at more than 1,000 days. These numbers are truly heartbreaking. Couples like don and Patricia, who have been together for 64 years, shouldn't have to wait three years to be reunited. Exp Eriences exemplify a broken and fragile long-term care system that is struggling to accommodate our aging population. Will the Minister please tell don and Patricia and every single family affected by the shortcomings of the long-term care system, why is it -- Acceptable that they wait years to be reunited with their loved ones?

>> Minister Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly and precisely why we're making these changes and I'm still not sure if the first individual is eligible for long-term care. There's -- obviously if he is not that would make it more challenging but, Mr. Speaker, we are and I'm going to say proposed because I'm not sure if the reg if it was in the legislation yesterday. Mr. Speaker, we're actually creating a separate category specifically to enable us and our long-term care homes and our lhins and families to reunite those sort of individuals who are both eligible for long-term care, who want to appropriately -- and we should encourage this and facilitate this -- to who want to live those remaining years together as a couple. So, Mr. Speaker, we're precisely addressing, and I guess I have to give credit to my collaboration with the member from niagara, because we looked at this and how together we might actually evolve a system. Where improvements are required and I believe we've got a fix. We've got a solution which will address precisely what the member is asking for.

MPP Des Rosiers to Minister Naidoo-Harris Re: Daycare Access/Investments

>> MPP Nathalie Des Rosiers: Voice of Translator: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for young children. I know firsthand point access to daycare is. I had four children that were attending day care at different parts of my life so I know that affordability and suitability to needs is very important to all inclusive families. Now in the riding that I have the privilege of representing, Ottawa Vanier, there are many new families that are arriving and are very anxious to know what are the day care options that are available to them. The anxiety to costs and to the suitability of the options that are available to the variety of their needs. So I want to ask whether the Minister can help us say what the government is doing. To meet this very important need in our different communities

>> Minister Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the hardworking member from Ottawa- Vanier for this very important question. She has been a strong advocate on this issue. Speaker, we know families across this province are facing challenges when it comes to finding child care. That's why our government is working tirelessly to help Ontario families find affordable, accessible quality child care options. In fact this week we announced that more than 8,400 children will benefit from the opening of 493 new child care rooms in close to 200 schools across the province. It's amazing news. Local schools are being renovated and retrofitted for these spaces. This investment is part of our five-year commitment to help 100,000 more children access spaces as part of this investment. We announced 200 million in the 2017 budget, which created 24,000 spaces. 16,000 of those are subsidized.

>> MPP Des Rosiers: Voice of Translator: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. For her absolute commitment to this essential aspect of life for Ontario families. It's very important for the future of Ontario to have good day care and to have access to all the care spaces that are needed. Indeed I think we know that there's a lot of work that needs to be done and that families want to know as well how this system will operate. There's some governance issues. People want to know where are the spaces going to be allocated? I know in my riding in particular, the question is asked regularly. Where -- how will the places be allocated throughout the province? To know exactly what the future of day care will look like in Ontario and I wish, S'il vous plait --How these 100,000 spaces will be allocated?

>> Minister Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to answer the member's important question. Absolutely people need to know where the spaces are going. We are investing \$1.6 billion in youth capital funding which supports the creation of 45,000 youth spaces in schools, public spaces and communities across the

province. As I mentioned we're building over 8,400 new spaces in 188 schools in Ontario. This includes 45 projects in French language schools, 81 projects in catholic schools, 50 child care projects in rural and northern school boards, creating 1,800 new child care spaces in that region. Speaker, these investments in close to 200 schools are helping us to fulfil our commitment. It's a historic invoicement, one that will benefit all of Ontario. And you will hear more about where these spaces are going in the coming weeks. Speaker, we're helping families with access to quality child care and we're building.